

## YORK MUSEUMS TRUST

### CYC Scrutiny Committee Report 1 April 2025

#### Our Vision

Connecting and inspiring people with the stories, history, art and culture of York and North Yorkshire.

#### Our Mission

Championing curiosity, inspiring creativity and creating opportunities for people to flourish as we collaborate to tell stories about our collections and places.

#### Our Values

- We value curiosity, creativity, generosity and responsibility equally and together.
- We are curious - We ask questions, we don't assume, we learn and we encourage different perspectives to be heard.
- We are creative - We have fun being creative, driving positive change and exploring potential.
- We are generous - We care for people, collections and places inviting everyone to develop knowledge, to take delight in and enjoy our spaces.
- We are responsible - We make informed decisions today for a better tomorrow and for a sustainable future.
- We are supportive - We collaborate and seek connection to grow a thriving community where we celebrate one another, cheer on progress and are heartfelt with feedback.

#### Priorities

Building and sustaining a flourishing organisation by:

- Delivering innovative public programming supporting an audience-focused, inclusive, visitor-first approach;
- Driving visitor income, meeting and exceeding enterprise and fundraising targets, managing expenditure;
- Identifying, developing and delivering a Masterplan and associated capital projects;
- Investing in our people ensuring we recruit, retain and develop a high performing team which celebrates diverse experiences and voices.
- Tackling climate change, understanding our carbon footprint and making incremental changes towards a net-zero future.
- Raising our profile through cultural leadership and partnerships working locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

#### Outcomes

1. We have a sustainable business model for the future and have sufficient resources to thrive.
2. We attract and welcome large numbers of people regardless of background and engage with them all in some way. York and North Yorkshire communities and visitors are inspired to be curious and creative.
3. YMT's employees, volunteers, contractors and creative practitioners have positive wellbeing and better reflect the diversity of the population - we provide a platform for people to develop their potential.

4. People, businesses, local government, key stakeholders, customers and funders invest in YMT.
5. City of York collections and buildings are managed and cared for into the future and become environmentally sustainable. They support new programming, participation, knowledge and research.
6. People who visit or work with YMT feel engaged with art, culture and a sense of place/identity.

### Performance – 2024/25

After the difficulties of 2023/24, brought about by the discovery of RAAC, expectations for **York Castle Museums**, were set low for 2024/25, not least because RAAC continued to impact on the museum through to the autumn of 2024 (when the upper half of the Female Prison reopened). With all the roof work completed, the entire museum was able to reopen for visitors and since then we have had a very strong footfall at Christmas and February half-term, proving that although visitor numbers continue to decrease overall, there is still strong interest in our offer, despite the adequacy of the facilities that support them.

Recognising that the main draw to the museum is Kirkgate and that customers find the experiential side of the offer to be the most rewarding, we have recently appointed an Immersive Interpretation Producer, whose role will be specifically aimed at ensuring Kirkgate, as well as other areas of the museum, are appropriately animated with engaging performances.

The work done to remedy RAAC has an expected life of 10 years and so we need to ensure that the offer at the Castle Museum is as strong as it can be for as long as possible because it remains by far our most popular venue in terms of footfall and income generation from ticket admissions.

In addition to our permanent exhibitions, we collaborated with Museumand, the National Caribbean Heritage Museum, for an exhibition at the Castle: *70 Objeks & Tings*, which told the stories of the Windrush Generation.

At the **Yorkshire Museum** we launched a new exhibition: *Star Car: Life after the ice*, an interactive exhibition that explored what life was like in North Yorkshire shortly after the last ice age, 11,000 years ago. This exhibition was complemented by an active public engagement programme, including a free living history recreation of a Mesolithic house in the gardens.

The phenomenal success of the Monet exhibition at **York Art Gallery** has shown us what our potential can be at that venue. We welcomed over 70,000 visitors to the gallery during the run of the exhibition, becoming the most successful we have ever held. The exhibition was accompanied by free family garden trails, activities and a wildflower garden in the Museum Gardens.

Working alongside partners we hosted *Reignite*, 'Culture Makes Places', events at the Yorkshire Museum and York Art Gallery in support of the creative industries and media arts and York's UNESCO City of Media Arts Designation.

We launched a full programme of school visits from September 2024 and we have engaged with most schools in the City. A list of these schools and extent of engagement is attached at Annex A. We have also included a list of the community groups we've been working with in 2023/24 at Annex B.

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All of York's children continue to benefit from free admission, along with those on Universal Credit, are seeking sanctuary or within the asylum process, or members of our community participation card scheme. All of our sites participate in York's residents weekend annually.

Using the Association of Independent Museums' *Economic Impact Toolkit*, for the calendar year 2024, YMT contributed nearly £18m of economic value towards the City of York.

Alongside our activity in our museums and galleries, we also expanded our offer in **York Museum Gardens**, to include the Futuresounds festival, a series of concerts that took place over a weekend in July. These proved very popular and profitable and we are working again with Futuresounds on a new festival for the summer of 2025.

And behind the scenes, YMT secured funding from NLHF to develop its future masterplan, the beginnings of a forward-looking piece of work that assessed the viability of the estate.

### Visitor numbers

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast
York Castle Museum	209,235	234,650
Yorkshire Museum	75,749	74,350
York Art Gallery	121,030	77,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>406,014</b>	<b>386,500</b>

By the close of financial year 2024/25, we expect that around 58,000 of our visitors will be child visits.

### Finances

The 2023/24 financial year finished with a small deficit of £54k and a budgeted deficit was set for 2024/25 of £208k, which has been revised down in the year to £111k.

The budget for the 2025/26 financial year has been set at £321k. This budget recognises that our visitor numbers are continuing to fall and despite the successes of our programming (Monet, our Christmas offer, for example), without considerable investment into the buildings and infrastructure, YMT's attractiveness to visitors will continue to decline because its overall offer doesn't meet modern standards (accessibility, facilities etc.).

With continued deficits, our reserves are less than 2 months of our operating costs and we are relying on the CYC letter of credit of £1m, which is supporting us as a last resort, to ensure we satisfy our going concern requirements with our auditors. The current iteration of the letter of credit will expire in April 2026.

It is clear that YMT is at a critical juncture in its existence. Although it generates almost 75% of its total funding itself through ticket admissions and through commercial operations, the remaining 25% of funding is reliant on CYC and Arts Council support. CYC provides £300k per year to YMT, down from £600k in 2015/16 and from £1.1m in 2014/15. YMT is confident that with the significant investment in its estate and an updating of facilities, it can generate more than 75% of its funding profile through its own means and thus achieve financial sustainability but until that investment is secured, YMT will need continued financial support from CYC.

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Through monthly meetings with CYC, and further quarterly in-depth conversations, CYC and YMT are working together to look at YMT's funding model as well as the critical areas that need investment to ensure all the venues can continue to meet the expectations of visitors and protect the generation of income.

### **Capital Programme**

We do not carry sufficient reserves to invest in our estate and the condition of our buildings in our care is of increasing concern. The roof works done on the Castle Museum in 2023/24 have extended the useability of the roof there for a further 10 years. The roof at the Yorkshire Museum is in urgent need of re-roofing and we were not successful in securing the £5m funding from Arts Council's MEND fund. Investment is also needed at the art gallery, in the humidity controls and CCTV, and each year we need to invest increasing amounts into our IT infrastructure given the changing nature of the visitor offer to being more experiential, as well as to replace our supporting digital systems.

**Kathryn Blacker**  
CEO

**York Museums Trust**  
March 2025

## Annex A

### YMT CoY School Visits: April 2024-March 2025

Between April 2024 and March 2025, the following CoY schools visited one of our sites:

1. All Saints Roman Catholic School
2. Applefields School
3. Archbishop of York's Church of England Junior School
4. Badger Hill Primary School
5. Burton Green Primary School
6. Clifton Green Primary School
7. Clifton with Rawcliffe Primary School
8. Copmanthorpe Primary School
9. Dringhouses Primary School
10. Dunnington Church of England Primary School
11. Elvington Church of England Primary School
12. Fishergate Primary School
13. Headlands Primary School
14. Hempland Primary Academy
15. Heworth Church of England Primary School
16. Hob Moor Oaks School
17. Lakeside Primary School
18. Lord Deramore's Primary School
19. Naburn Church of England Primary School
20. New Earswick Primary School
21. Poppleton Ousebank Primary School
22. Poppleton Road Primary School
23. Scarcroft Primary School
24. St George's Roman Catholic Primary School
25. St Lawrence's Church of England Primary School
26. St Paul's Church of England Primary School
27. St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School
28. Wigginton Primary School
29. Woodthorpe Primary School
30. Yearsley Grove Primary School
31. York High School

A total of **70** visits were made by these schools, with a total of **2806** pupils participating.

Yorkshire Museum – CoY School Visits – April 2023 to March 2025				
Date	School	Type	Pupils	Visit
10 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Applefields School	Special	5	Self-guided
17 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Clifton with Rawcliffe Primary School	Primary	70	Self-guided
10 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	New Earswick Primary School	Primary	26	Self-guided
5 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Lord Deramore's Primary School	Primary	33	Time Odyssey
7 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Lord Deramore's Primary School	Primary	33	Time Odyssey

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14th June 2024	St Lawrence's Church of England Primary School	Primary	25	Time Odyssey
28th June 2024	St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School	Primary	32	Self-guided
3rd July 2024	Lord Deramore's Primary School	Primary	62	Self-guided
10th July 2024	Woodthorpe Primary School	Primary	30	Time Odyssey
10th July 2024	St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School	Primary	32	Self-guided
11th July 2024	All Saints Roman Catholic School	Secondary	60	Self-guided
12th July 2024	Woodthorpe Primary School	Primary	30	Time Odyssey
4th October 2024	Scarcroft Primary Academy	Primary	55	Self-guided
9 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	Yearsley Grove Primary School	Primary	51	Discover: Prehistoric Yorkshire Pilot
11th October 2024	Lakeside Primary School	Primary	32	Time Odyssey
15th October 2024	Dringhouses Primary School	Primary	30	Discover: Roman York Workshop
16th October 2024	Dringhouses Primary School	Primary	30	Discover: Roman York Workshop
17th October 2024	Dringhouses Primary School	Primary	30	Discover: Roman York
22nd October 2024	Dringhouses Primary School	Primary	45	Self-guided
23rd October 2024	Dringhouses Primary School	Primary	45	Self-guided
22nd November 2024	New Earswick Primary School	Primary	23	Discover: Prehistoric Yorkshire – Workshop Pilots
4th December 2024	Clifton Green Primary School	Primary	30	Self-guided
5th December 2024	Clifton Green Primary School	Primary	30	Self-guided

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10th December 2024	Poppleton Road Primary School	Primary	59	Discover: Roman York
25th February 2025	St George's Roman Catholic Primary School	Primary	24	Self-guided
25th March 2025	Lord Deramore's Primary School	Primary	32	Discover: Prehistoric Yorkshire Workshop
27th March 2025	Lord Deramore's Primary School	Primary	32	Discover: Prehistoric Yorkshire Workshop
28th March 2025	Lord Deramore's Primary School	Primary	32	Discover: Prehistoric Yorkshire Workshop

York Castle Museum – CoY School Visits – April 2023 to March 2025				
9th April 2024	Elvington Church of England Primary School	Primary	24	Self-guided
1st May 2024	Clifton Green Primary School	Primary	60	Self-guided
10th May 2024	Clifton with Rawcliffe Primary School	Primary	86	Self-guided
8th July 2024	Headlands Primary School	Primary	88	Self-guided
30th July 2024	York High School	Secondary	45	Self-guided
1st October 2024	Scarcroft Primary School	Primary	55	Self-guided
14th October 2024	Hob Moor Oaks School	Special	7	Self-guided
15th October 2024	Archbishop of York's Church of England Junior School	Primary	96	Self-guided
16th October 2024	Lord Deramore's Primary School	Primary	30	Self-guided
18th October 2024	Hob Moor Oaks School	Special	16	Self-guided
21st October 2024	Hob Moor Oaks School	Special	8	Self-guided
5th November 2024	Dunnington Church of England Primary School	Primary	35	Self-guided

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5th November 2024	Copmanthorpe Primary School	Primary	67	Self-guided
19th November 2024	Naburn Church of England Primary School	Primary	24	Self-guided
19th November 2024	St Paul's Church of England Primary School	Primary	23	Self-guided
4th December 2024	All Saints Roman Catholic School	Secondary	10	Self-guided
10th December 2024	Applefields School	Special	2	Self-guided
19th December 2024	Wigginton Primary School	Primary	29	Self-guided
14th January 2025	St Paul's Church of England Primary School	Primary	22	Self-guided
10th February 2025	Burton Green Primary School	Primary	31	Self-guided
10th March 2025	Badger Hill Primary School	Primary	28	Self-guided
19th March 2025	Heworth Church of England Primary School	Primary	40	Self-guided

York Art Gallery – CoY School Visits – April 2023 to March 2025						
10th 2024	May	Poppleton Primary School	Road Primary	Primary	60	Self-guided
15th 2024	May	Fishergate School	Primary	Primary	85	Self-guided
13th 2024	June	Scarcroft School	Primary	Primary	53	Self-guided
14th 2024	June	Clifton Green School	Primary	Primary	40	Self-guided
20th 2024	June	Hempland Academy	Primary	Primary	60	Self-guided
21st 2024	June	Burton Green School	Primary	Primary	22	Self-guided
26th 2024	June	Fishergate School	Primary	Primary	60	Self-guided
27th 2024	June	Fishergate School	Primary	Primary	30	Self-guided
28 <sup>th</sup> 2024	June	Yearsley Grove School	Primary	Primary	61	Self-guided



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28th June 2024	Clifton Green Primary School	Primary	30	Self-guided
3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2024	St Wilfrid's Roamn Catholic Primary School	Primary	30	Self-guided
17th July 2024	Burton Green Primary School	Primary	49	Self-guided
23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2024	Yearsley Grove Primary School	Primary	99	Self-guided
24th October 2024	Yearsley Grove Primary School	Primary	46	Self-guided
25th October 2024	Yearsley Grove Primary School	Primary	49	Self-guided
Friday 25th October 2024	Yearsley Grove Primary School	Primary	57	Self-guided
6th November 2024	St George's Roman Catholic Primary School	Primary	30	Self-guided
8 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	York High School	Primary	18	Self-guided
13 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Burton Green Primary School	Primary	31	Self-guided
13 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Poppleton Ousebank Primary School	Primary	52	Self-guided

### Annex B Engagement Activities and Projects

Creation of Community Participation and Engagement Framework

Participated in Our City Festival

Co-produced exhibition YCM – 70 Objekts and Tings

with MuseumNext and National Caribbean Heritage Museum

York Travellers Trust Store Visit 7 people

MamaKula – tour of Objekts and Tings 12 people

Dementia Forward – Time Out Together site visits – 30 people

Black History Month events – Soundsystem on Kirkgate, 50 people

Wellbeing project partnership with Cultural Health and Wellbeing Alliance and Dementia Forward (50 people engaged)

Supported International Day for Older Persons with use of Gardens and free workshop at YAG

York LGBT History Month – Hosted launch on Kirkgate, partnered with University of York BA

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History for research project

York Social Prescribers hosted at YCM and YAG

### Masterplan

Heritage Hunters – Museum Gardens – 13 residents

HERStory.York project – Women of the Gardens – 4 volunteers

<b>Play and Wellbeing in the Gardens</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of people</b>
Eco-Therapy x3	St Nicks Group	Art Gallery/Gardens	65
Eco-Therapy x 3 sessions	Sketchbook Circle group	Art Gallery/Gardens	68
Forest School	York Inspirational Kids York Mosque Scouts group MamaKula	Gardens/Pavilion	22
Art for Wellbeing	Foss Park Acute Mental Health Hospital	Gardens/Pavilion	25
Sketchbook Circle x2	St Nicks Group	Yorkshire Museum/Gardens	55
Dosti Picnic	Various diverse groups, including wider community & tourists	Gardens	375 plus
Walking tour of Gardens x2	Krya	Gardens	26
Wellbeing and play workshop x2	York Inspirational Kids	Offsite at YiK hub	18
Walking tour of Gardens	Ad Astra	Gardens	3
Community Cinema Club	York Chinese Community	TA Hall	46
Storytelling and Play	York Mosque Scouts	TA Hall/Gardens	19
Community Cinema Club	Ukrainian Society	TA Hall	36
Bulb planting	Kyra	Gardens/Pavilion	3
Bulb planting	One Adoption	Gardens/Pavilion	24
Community Cinema Club	York Mosque Fourth Avenue Mosque York Indian Cultural Association	TA Hall	22
Storytelling and Play	RAY	Gardens/Pavilion	55
Community Cinema Club	York Inspiration Kids	TA Hall	43
Community Cinema Club	York Carers Alzheimer's Society	TA Hall	21

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York Castle Museum tour x2	RAY Bradford Association	York Castle Museum	95
Community Cinema Club	Kyra	TA Hall	32
York Castle Museum tour x2	Ad Astra	York Castle Museum	13
Loan Box and Festive card workshop	RAY	TA Hall	42
Tour of Museum Gardens	York Carers Walking Group	Gardens	22
Community Cinema Club	National Young Carers Group	TA Hall	45
Community Cinema Club	One Adoption	TA Hall	33
Tai Chi x13 (to Sept 2025)	Open to the public	Gardens	390